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(54) Beverage topping

(57) The invention relates to the use of frozen concentrated and aerated milk for preparing a hot beverage having foamed milk-based topping on the addition of a fluid product. The invention also relates to a product comprising a flavoured beverage base and frozen milk concentrates constituting distinct separate portions of the product, the frozen milk incorporates gas, the product providing a flavoured beverage having a foamed milk topping upon addition of a liquid and melting.

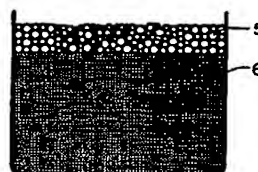
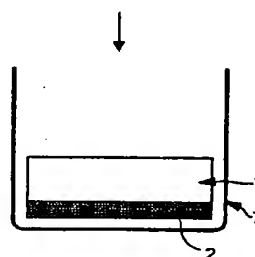
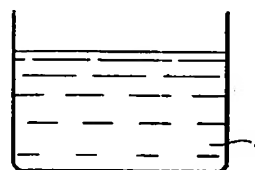


FIG. 1

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to the making of a hot aerated or foamed liquid product or beverage. In particular to a product for making a foamed topping for a hot beverage, more particularly for making a Cappuccino-style coffee beverage.

[0002] Conventional instant hot Cappuccino dry-mix compositions are based on powder components such as dried coffee solids, dried milk solids with added flavours, stabilisers, and sweeteners. The coffee and milk concentrates are usually in a granular or particulated form incorporating a gas. The addition of boiling water or hot milk results in an instant beverage with a foam topping. The formation of a foamed phase above the coffee/milk liquid is due to physical or chemical means of gas incorporation into the milk solids.

[0003] Cappuccino compositions of the above-discussed types are described in European Patent 0154192 and International Patent Application WO96/08153.

[0004] It has been found that the incorporation of gas into the powder can change the density of the powder making it more fragile. The amount of gas incorporated may thus be limited by the limitations to the density for the powder. Furthermore, for some powder compositions a high foam volume in the final beverage may be difficult to achieve.

[0005] The present invention aims at providing a hot beverage e.g. Cappuccino product, with the following characteristics:

1) Improved foaming properties.

2) Taste, texture and appearance close to authentic Italian Cappuccino.

3) Improved coffee taste in the liquid portion and improved coffee-to-milk flavour balance in the whole beverage preparation.

[0006] Accordingly, in a first aspect, the invention relates to a use of frozen concentrated milk having an overrun of at least 150 % for preparing a hot beverage having foamed milk-based topping on the addition of a fluid product.

[0007] It has surprisingly been found that upon the addition of a fluid product a foamed milk-based product may be formed on the top of a hot beverage. The fluid product may be added cold and then heated with the topping or it may be hot or boiling when it is added to the frozen concentrated milk. If the beverage needs to be heated this may conveniently be done in a microwave oven or by other means providing heat into the product.

[0008] The invention is particularly suitable for the preparation of a beverage with a milk topping, the beverage being selected from the group consisting of coffee, cocoa or chocolate based drink or a mixture thereof.

[0009] According to the invention an improved milk aroma/flavour in the foam phase may be obtained compared with dried foamable products as the concentrates are made without a drying step. In addition it is believed that also the functional properties of the milk ingredients may be improved. It has been found that the invention may provide a taste and aroma balance which is close to that of an original formula of authentic Italian Cappuccino due to it being based on milk solids which are less processed except for an initial heat-treatment for pasteurisation and possibly one concentration step.

[0010] In addition, the present invention may avoid the problem related to the formation of lumps during reconstitution with wrongly tempered e.g. boiling water of dried-coffee mixes. It has furthermore been found that the milk proteins in the frozen form may be better protected against heat, than in dried products, and that the pH induced flocculation when reconstituted simultaneously with coffee solids.

[0011] Suitable liquids for the beverage are products selected from the group consisting of water, milk and a mixture thereof, coffee, cocoa, or chocolate based liquid.

[0012] In a preferred embodiment of the invention the frozen concentrated milk is used together with a flavoured beverage base, such as instant coffee, cocoa, chocolate etc. If such beverage bases are used in connection with the frozen milk concentrate the consumer simply needs to add water or milk and do the necessary heating in order to obtain a hot flavoured beverage with a foamed milk topping. The use of the invention may allow the liquid part and the foamed topping to be reconstituted as two distinct phases.

[0013] The milk used for the frozen concentrated milk is conveniently pasteurised milk such as whole or skimmed milk. The milk is advantageously pasteurised whole milk. The expression milk also covers products derived from milk such as liquid creams. An example of a liquid cream is half-cream with about 15% fat.

[0014] Pasteurised whole or skimmed milk is concentrated by conventional evaporation or any other technological means of concentration like freeze-concentration, reverse osmosis, ultra-filtration etc. Upon concentration, the total content of milk solids is suitably from 10 to 50 %, preferable greater than about 20%.

[0015] The concentrate is then frozen. Conventional ice-cream freezers may be used. However, advantageously, the freezing may take place in an extruder, preferably a twin-screw extruder. In the extruder the pressures and flow rates in

extrusion die can be adjusted such that the milk portion of the product is aerated to over 200% overrun. The flow rates of the supply of the milk and coffee solids are regulated to produce different combinations and formulations of milk and coffee frozen solids. It may be advantageous that the milk concentrate is pre-aerated before entering the twin-screw freezer/extruder. Freezing in an extruder is described in our co-pending European patent application the content of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0016] In our co-pending European patent application 96201352.0) a cold extrusion technology is described by which evaporated or concentrated milk solids are frozen and aerated in a manner such that a phase-stable milk drink is obtained upon addition of water or melting to room temperature. Twin-screw freezing technology enables continuous mixing, aeration and freezing of milk solids. Furthermore, it allows a flexible manner of gas incorporation and can give a better control of foam texture and volume in the final beverage preparation

[0017] In a manner as described above, coffee extract is concentrated by conventional evaporative means. A suitable concentrate has a total solid content of 15 to 70 % by weight, preferably from about 40 to 70% solids.

[0018] Additional aromatisation of the coffee extract is also possible.

[0019] In a preferred embodiment of the invention the concentrated milk forms part of a topping material and the concentrated milk constitutes at least 90 % wt of the non-aerated topping material, preferably above 95 % wt. In a particularly favourable embodiment of the invention 97 to 99 % by weight of the topping base is concentrated milk. The topping material is aerated and frozen to form a frozen topping. The high percentages of concentrated milk in the topping material provide a clear and distinct milk flavour to the topping when reconstituted.

[0020] Overrun, is defined as the volume percentage of gas, usually, air, in relation to the gas-free constituents. The overrun may result from whipping action or aggregation. The milk can be aerated with a gas selected from the group consisting of air, nitrogen and carbon dioxide.

[0021] The overrun of the frozen concentrated milk is in the range from about 130 to 250 %, preferably above 150 %, more preferably at least 170%. Advantageously, the overrun is from about 200 to 250 %. The level of overrun can be chosen depending on the how airy or light one wishes the topping to be. With a high overrun a higher, lighter and more aerated topping is obtained. With an overrun about 130 % the topping will generate a thin layer of foam on the beverage.

[0022] In the present context hot means at least around 40° C, preferably above about 50° C, more preferably the temperature of the beverage is in the range of 55 to 65° C. The beverage is conveniently heated by electromagnetic heating such as microwave heating either in a conventional oven or on a hot plate. If very hot or boiling water is used there may not be a need for additional heating of the beverage. Then the beverage will usually be in the range of 45 to 50° C but may even be up to 55° C. If desired the beverage could even be consumed before the topping is totally melted. The beverage is then hot and the topping cool.

[0023] In a second aspect, the invention relates to a product comprising a flavoured beverage base and frozen milk concentrates constituting distinct separate portions of the product, the frozen milk incorporates gas at an overrun of at least 150 %, the product providing a flavoured beverage having a foamed milk topping upon addition of a liquid and melting.

[0024] A suitable flavoured beverage base is cocoa or coffee in the form of soluble coffee or frozen concentrated or non-concentrated frozen coffee liquor. The separate distinct portions of milk concentrates and flavoured beverage base are preferably generated by layering the portions onto one another. By having distinct portions of the flavoured beverage base and the milk it is possible to generate a product, which upon the addition of a liquid, has a topping of a high degree of whiteness and clear milk taste over a beverage portion which has the flavour of the beverage base. Alternatively, the distinct portions of the product may be provided by co-extruding the two portions.

[0025] Considerations with regard to preferred embodiments of the invention in connection with the use discussed above are also applicable to the product and visa versa.

[0026] For the making of Cappuccino, the frozen concentrated milk has a solid content from about 10 to 50 % by weight and the flavoured beverage base is frozen concentrated coffee liquor having a solid content from about 15 to 70 % by weight.

[0027] For the making of one cup of hot beverage one takes for example from 75 to 150 ml, 10 to 30 grams of concentrated milk having a solid content from 20 to 50%, may be used. The appropriate amount depends on the desired thickness, taste and texture of the topping.

[0028] In addition, a beverage prepared in accordance with this invention may also be used for the making of an airy Cafe-au-lait beverage. This can be obtained if the product is subjected to a stirring thus distributing the aeration throughout the product.

[0029] Furthermore, the invention relates to a package comprising a portion of flavoured beverage base and a portion of a frozen concentrated milk, the frozen milk incorporates gas at an overrun of at least 150 %, the portions providing a flavoured beverage having a foamed milk topping upon addition of a liquid and thawing.

[0030] Conveniently, the package comprises a first compartment comprising the portion of flavoured beverage base and a second compartment comprising frozen concentrated milk.

[0031] In a special version, the package is in the form of a cup comprising flavoured beverage base and frozen con-

centrated milk for one serving, said cup being adapted to receive the liquid for reconstitution and the making of a beverage. This is a favourable way of distributing the product as for the preparation of the product, the consumer only needs to add a liquid such as water or milk.

[0032] Finally, the invention also relates to a method for providing a hot beverage with a foamed topping, said method comprising the steps of: providing concentrated milk; freezing the concentrated milk concentrates; incorporating gas into an overrun of at least 150 %, preferably 200 to 250 %; adding a liquid; and heating if necessary so as to make a hot beverage with a foamed topping. Considerations as to preferred ways of carrying out this method are given above.

[0033] The invention will now be further described with reference to the examples and drawing by example only, in which

Fig. 1 is an illustration of the making of Cappuccino on the basis of frozen concentrated milk and frozen coffee liquor,

Fig. 2 is an illustration of the making of Cappuccino on the basis of frozen concentrated milk and soluble coffee, and

Fig. 3 illustrates the making of a coffee beverage from co-extruded coffee liquor and aerated frozen concentrated milk.

EXAMPLE 1

[0034] Milk/Coffee tablets are made the following way:

[0035] A concentrate of coffee solids is prepared of reconstituted soluble coffee. It is deposited in the bottom of a plastic cup and stored under freezing conditions.

[0036] Concentrated milk is frozen in a twin screw freezer, see example 2. A portion of frozen aerated concentrated milk is compacted or arranged in a particular pattern on top of the frozen coffee concentrate to form a tablet having a layer of coffee and a layer of concentrated milk. The overrun of the product is from 200 to 250 %.

[0037] The formulations of tablets are, the amounts giving in weight of the total weight of the tablet:

3 to 7% coffee solids
15 to 30 % milk solids
3 to 7% sugar
60 to 65% water

[0038] Similarly, tablets are prepared with a coffee portion of coffee liquor having a solid content of 10-20 % by weight. The coffee liquor is frozen.

[0039] Beverages are prepared from the tablets.

EXAMPLE 2

[0040] As discussed above the concentrated milk may advantageously be frozen by using twin-screw freezing. The twin-screw freezing technology is illustrated by an example in which skimmed milk for a topping is frozen.

[0041] A skimmed milk is pasteurised and then introduced at 25°C into an evaporator where it is concentrated to 30 % dry matter.

[0042] This concentrate is introduced into a twin-screw extruder, the barrel of which has nine 100 mm long segments F1 to F9 with which are associated individual cooling circuits through which a water-alcohol mixture passes. It is possible to introduce air from either side of the barrel by means of a piston provided with a mass flow meter.

[0043] The operating conditions are given below:

- Configuration of screws 1 and 2

Segments	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6-F7	F8-F9
Type of screw	T	T	T	M/C	T	CO	CO
Where T: Transport, M: Mixing, C: Shear and CO: Compression							

- Without air injection.

- Flow rate/temperature of concentrate: 10 kg/h in F1/5°C

- Rate of rotation of screws: 400 rpm.
- Diameter of die (without outlet pipe or valve): 1.2 mm
- Temperature in the barrel segments and die plate:

Segments	F1-F2	F3	F4-F9	Plate
Temperature (°C)	+3 to +5	-8.5	-10 to -11	-8 to -10

[0044] The temperature of the mass on emerging from the die is -9°C.

[0045] The product obtained has an oily and creamy texture, which is not the case when the same concentrate is treated in a conventional freezer. It shows good stability on freezing with a minimum of retraction in area.

[0046] Its behaviour on thawing is also different and it is melting much more slowly. It produces a much colder sensation in the mouth. The frozen concentrate is perfectly homogeneous, without solid/liquid phase separation and can be stored without adverse changes at -18°C. When it is solidified at -18°C and brought to room temperature, the frozen concentrate retained its shape for at least 30 min., whereas the same product treated in a conventional freezer becomes entirely liquid in less than 15 min. Moreover, the product was stable to temperature variations.

EXAMPLE 3

[0047] A cup of Cappuccino is made using a tablet having a concentrated milk part and a flavour beverage base.

[0048] Fig. 1 illustrates the tablet positioned in a cup 7. The tablet has an upper layer of frozen concentrated milk 1 and a bottom layer of frozen flavour beverage base 2.

[0049] A frozen 35-gram tablet prepared as described in example 1 is e.g. used. It comprises 2 gram coffee solids, 10 gram milk solids, 20 gram water and 1.5 gram of sugar.

[0050] The tablet is positioned in a cup 7 and water 4 is added. A suitable amount is 100 ml. The tablet and the water are then heated in a microwave oven and a Cappuccino beverage is generated. The Cappuccino is examined; it has a distinct lower coffee beverage part 6 covered with a white milk foam layer 5.

[0051] The cup 7 may be the package in which the aerated frozen concentrated milk is sold. The concentrated milk may be with or without the flavoured beverage base. If the product is sold in a cup package, the consumer can prepare the product by simply adding an appropriate liquid to the cup and perform any necessary heating. In an alternative version, not shown in the drawings, the package has two compartments. One for the concentrated milk and one for the flavoured beverage base. This allows the consumer to adjust the taste of the beverage by varying the amount added of the beverage base.

EXAMPLE 4

[0052] Fig. 2 shows a coffee beverage being prepared in a manner similar to that described in example 3. However, here the coffee liquor 2 at the bottom of the cup is replaced by soluble coffee portion 3.

EXAMPLE 5

[0053] Fig. 3 shows a concentrate of coffee solids 2 made of coffee liquor having a solid content of 10 to 40 % by weight. The coffee concentrate 2 is co-extruded with the frozen aerated concentrated milk 1.

[0054] A coffee product is prepared as discussed in example 4. The beverage having a coffee beverage part 6 and a foamed milk topping 5 is generated.

[0055] The product can be made into an airy café-au-lait type of product by stirring the content so as to distribute the foam 5 through out the beverage part 6.

Claims

1. Use of frozen concentrated milk having an overrun of at least 150 % for preparing a hot beverage having foamed milk-based topping on the addition of a fluid product.
2. Use according to claim 1, wherein the hot beverage is a beverage selected from the group consisting of coffee, cocoa or chocolate based drink or a mixture thereof.

3. Use according to either of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the concentrated milk is frozen by means of a twin-screw freezer.
4. Use according to any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the fluid added to the product is selected from the group consisting of water, milk and a mixture thereof, coffee, cocoa, or chocolate based liquid.
5. Use according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the frozen concentrated milk is used together with a flavoured beverage base.
6. Use according to any of claims 1 to 5, wherein the frozen concentrated milk has a solid content of 10 to 50 % by weight.
7. Use according to any of claims 1 to 6, wherein the concentrated milk forms part of a topping base and the concentrated milk constitutes at least 95 % wt of the non aerated topping base.
8. A product comprising a flavoured beverage base and frozen milk concentrates constituting distinct separate portions of the product, the frozen milk incorporates gas at an overrun of at least 150 %, the product providing a flavoured beverage having a foamed milk topping upon addition of a liquid and melting.
9. A frozen product according to claim 8, wherein the flavoured beverage base is cocoa or coffee in the form of soluble coffee or frozen concentrated or non-concentrated frozen coffee liquor.
10. A product according to any of claims 8 to 9, wherein the distinct portions of milk concentrates and flavoured beverage base are layered or are co-extruded.
11. A product according to any of claims 8 to 10, wherein the concentrated milk is aerated with a gas selected from the group consisting of air, nitrogen and carbon dioxide.
12. A product according to any of claims 8 to 11, wherein the milk concentrates are frozen and aerated to an overrun from about 200 to 250 %.
13. A product according to any of claims 9 to 12, wherein the frozen concentrated milk has a solid content from about 10 to 50 % by weight and the flavoured beverage base is frozen concentrated coffee liquor having a solid content from about 15 to 70 % by weight.
14. A product according to any of claims 8 to 13, comprising 10 to 35 grams of concentrated milk.
15. A package comprising a portion of flavoured beverage base and a portion of a frozen concentrated milk, the frozen milk incorporates gas at an overrun of at least 150 %, the portions providing a flavoured beverage having a foamed milk topping upon addition of a liquid and melting.
16. A package according to claim 15, wherein the package comprises a first compartment comprising the portion of flavoured beverage base and a second compartment comprising frozen concentrated milk.
17. A package according to claim 15, wherein the package is in the form of a cup comprising flavoured beverage base and frozen concentrated milk for one serving, said cup being adapted to receive the liquid for reconstituting of the making of a beverage.

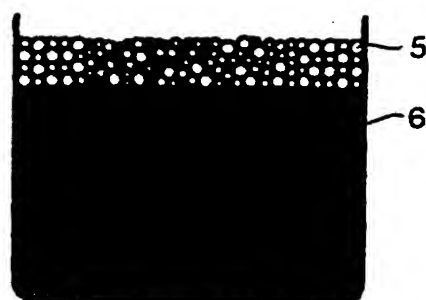
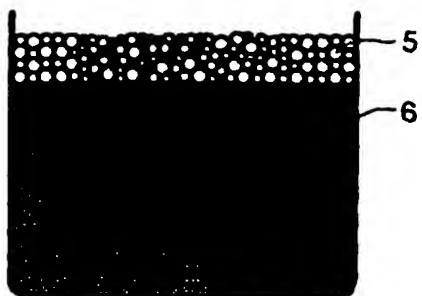
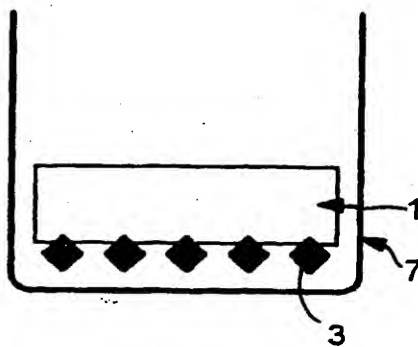
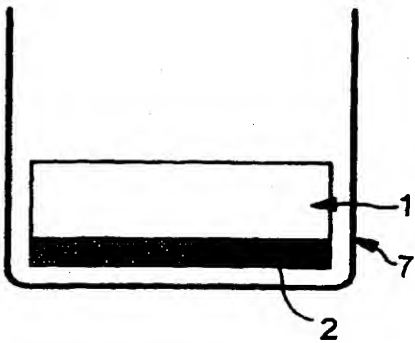
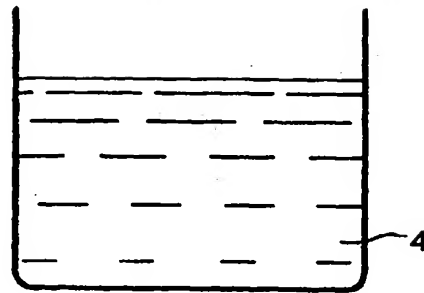
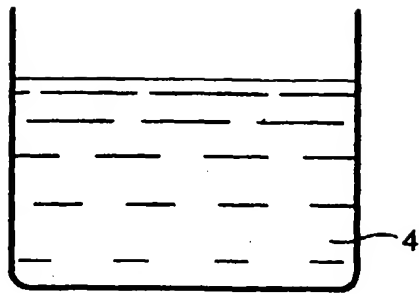


FIG. 1

FIG. 2

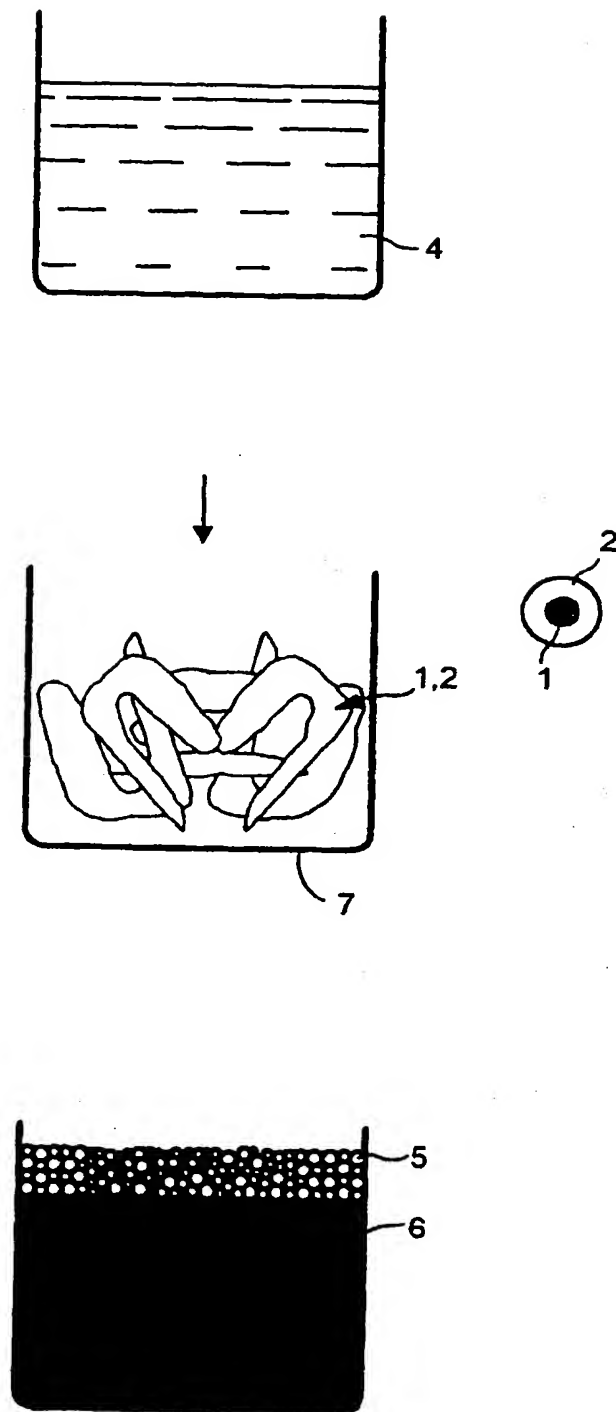


FIG. 3



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 97 20 3469

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
A	FR 2 275 155 A (UNILEVER) * page 4, line 21 - line 36; example 1 *	1, 2, 8-10, 13	A23C9/152 A23C3/04 A23F5/24
A	US 4 542 035 A (V. HUANG) * column 3, line 18 - column 4, line 11 * * column 4, line 50 - line 56 *	1	
A	AU 433 847 B (MASAMITSU KIDO) * claims 1-10 *	1, 8, 15	
A	EP 0 713 650 A (SOCIETE DES PRODUITS NESTLE) * claims 1-12; examples 1, 12, 13 *	1, 3	
A	US 3 492 126 A (I. RUBENSTEIN)		
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			A23C A23F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 7 April 1998	Examiner Desmedt, G
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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